A

SERMON

PREACHED

Before the Right Honourable

THE

Lord MAYOR

AND

ALDERMEN

OF

LONDON.

At the SPITTLE,

April 14. 1680.

By *JOHN SHARPE*, D. D. Rector of St. *Giles* in the Fields, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord High Chancellour of *England*.

LONDON,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby* at the *Bishop's-Head*, in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1680.

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To the Right Honourable

Sir ROBERT CLAYTON,

Lord MAYOR

OF

LONDON,

And to His

LADY.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

I Make bold to prefix both Your Names tot his Sermon, though it was at Your Request, MADAM, *that I published it, not only because I have received many Obligations from You both, which I take this Opportunity to acknowledge and thank You for: But also because You are both known to be*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Eminent Examples of that Virtue which is in the following Discourse Recommended. May all in Your Circumstances imitate You herein; and may You always be in a condition to be Patterns to others. Thus prayeth,

Your most Obliged

and Humble Servant,

J. SHARPE.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

At the SPITTLE.

1 TIM. vi. 17, 18, 19.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.

Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life.

GROTIUS his Note upon this Text is this, that St. *Paul* now having finiſhed this his Epiſtle to *Timothy*, it comes into his mind that there was need of ſome more particular application to be made, and admonition to be given to thoſe Wealthy Merchants, with which the City of *Epheſus* (where *Timothy* reſided) did then

abound; and upon this consideration he inserts those words I have now read, *charge them that are rich in this world*, &c.

How famous soever the City of *Ephesus* was at that time for Wealth or Trade; there is little doubt to be made, that this City of ours (praised be God for it) doth in those respects, at this day, equal, if not much exceed it. And therefore that which S. *Paul* thought of so great importance as to give especial orders to *Timothy*, to press upon the *Ephesian* Citizens, will always be very fit to be seriously recommended to you in this place; and more especially at this time, since it is the proper work of the day. Waving therefore wholly the argument of our Saviours *Resurrection*, upon which you have before been entertained; I apply my self without farther preface to conclude this *Easter*-Solemnity with that, with which St. *Paul* concludes his Epistle, *viz.* with a short discourse of the *Rich mans great duty and concernment*, which is in these words plainly set forth to us.

In them we may take notice of these three Generals, which I shall make the heads of my following discourse.

First, The duty it self incumbent upon those *that are rich in this world*, expressed in several particulars.

Secondly, the great Obligation that lies upon them to the performance of it, which we may gather

ther from the vehemence and the Authority with which St. *Paul* orders *Timothy* to preſs it, *charge them* (ſaith he) *that are rich, that they be not*, &c.

Thirdly, the mighty encouragement they have to obſerve this *charge*, for hereby, *they lay up to themſelves in ſtore a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

Firſt, I begin with the Rich mans duty, which is here expreſſed in Four points, two of them *Negative*, teaching what things he ought to avoid; the other two *poſitive*, teaching what he ought to practiſe. They are theſe,

I. *That he ſhould not be high minded.*
II. *That he ſhould not truſt in uncertain riches.*
III. *That he ſhould truſt in the living God.*
IV. *That he ſhould do good, be rich in good works*, &c.

The Firſt thing that is given in charge to all thoſe that are *rich in this world*, is that *they be not high minded*, μὴ ὑψηλοφρονεῖν, that they do not think too well of themſelves for being rich, and take occaſion from thence to deſpiſe others that are in meaner circumſtances than they. They are not to value themſelves a jot the more, or to think worſe of others upon account of that outward fortune they are poſſeſſed of, but are in all their converſation to

expreſs the ſame moderation and humanity and eaſineſs and obligingneſs of temper to thoſe they have to do with, even the meaneſt and the pooreſt, as if they ſtood with them upon the ſame level.

And with very great reaſon hath St. *Paul* given this caution to rich men. For by the experience of the world it hath been always found, that wealth is apt to puff up, to make men look big, and to breed in them a contempt of others; but what little ground there is for this, is eaſily ſeen by any that will give themſelves leave to conſider.

For what doth any of theſe worldly goods (which make us keep at diſtance) really add to a man in point of true worth and value? do they either recommend him more to God or to wiſe men or even to himſelf, if he have a grain of ſenſe in him, than if he was without them? certainly they do not. For that for which either God approves us, or wiſe men eſteem us, or we can ſpeak peace and content to our ſelves, is not any thing without us, any thing that fortune hath given to us; but ſomething that we may more truly call our own, ſomething that we were neither born with, nor could any body hinder us of, nor can be taken from us, that is to ſay, the Riches of our minds, our Virtuous and commendable qualities.

A man is no more a fit object of eſteem, meerly for being rich, than the beaſt he rides on (if I may uſe

uſe the old compariſon) is of commendation for the coſtly Trappings he wears.

Secondly, Another caution given to thoſe that are rich in this world, is, *that they ſhould not truſt in uncertain riches.* This likewiſe is a temptation to which they are expoſed, and our Saviour hath very lively ſet it forth to us in the Parable of the *Rich man* in the Goſpel, who having got mighty poſſeſſions, and filled his barns, thought of nothing further; but preſently ſaith to himſelf, *ſoul take thy eaſe, eat, drink and be merry, for thou haſt goods laid up for many years*: But the concluſion of that parable doth ſufficiently ſhew the vanity and ridiculouſneſs of this *truſting in our riches*, for a meſſage comes to him from God, *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee, and then whoſe ſhall all theſe things be that thou haſt provided?* It is the greateſt madneſs in the world to pleaſe, or ſpeak peace to our ſelves upon account of that, which we are not ſure to enjoy a day, but we may for any thing we know be ſnatch'd away the next moment into another world, and ſo muſt leave the joy and pride of our hearts to we know not whom. *Luke* 12. 16, &c.

But ſuppoſing we had ſome certainty of our lives, and could promiſe our ſelves that we ſhould not leave our wealth for ſome competent time, yet we have no certainty that our wealth will not leave

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us. How prosperous soever our present circumstances be, yet we cannot ensure the continuance of them; there are a thousand accidents may happen every day which may strip us as naked as when we came into the world; and we may be reduced to the extremities of those who are now the greatest objects of our compassion and charity; and this is that which St. *Paul* in the Text insinuates when he calls them *uncertain riches*. But what are we then to trust in, if not in these things? this St. *Paul* shews in the words following which make

The Third instance of the Rich mans duty, *Let them* (saith he) *trust in the living God, who giveth to all men richly to enjoy*. The sence of it is this; Let them from the bottom of their hearts acknowledge God to be the Author and giver of all that they possess: How much soever their Heads projected, or their Hands laboured, or their Parents and Friends were kind to them; yet it is the Providence of the Almighty to which they owe all. The same divine foresight and contrivance that feeds the Fowls of the air, and clothes the Flowers of the field, doth also *give them richly all things to enjoy*; and therefore upon that Providence are they entirely to depend, as much exercising Faith in God, and reposing confidence in him, as if they had no visible provisions made for them: And as heartily returning thanks to their great

great Benefactor for every bleſſing they have (ſeem it never ſo much their own already,) as a hungry man that knows not where to get a meal, would to him that ſhould give him a plentiful entertainment. In a word, thoſe that have all things in this world muſt as devoutly look up to God, both in gratefully aſcribing to him every enjoyment either paſt or preſent, and in a full truſt and relyance upon him for what is to come, as thoſe that live from hand to mouth; ſince it is the ſame divine Providence that feeds and maintains both the Poor and the Rich, and of his infinite goodneſs gives to all that fear him, even to the poor as well as the rich, all things to enjoy; and though to the one more plentifully, yet to the other perhaps with as much content though not in ſo great abundance.

The Fourth and laſt part of the Rich mans duty here mentioned concerns the right uſe of that wealth that God hath given him. Now the right uſe of Riches according to the Text doth conſiſt in theſe things. That thoſe that have them *do good* with them, *that they be rich in good works*, that they be *ready to diſtribute*, *willing to communicate*.

If we ſuppoſe every one of theſe diſtinct phraſes in the Text, to denote a diſtinct thing, then we are to give this account of the paſſage, That S. *Paul* here uſeth a gradation in his ſpeech, begins with the

the loweſt and moſt general expreſſions of Charity, and ſo goes on to higher degrees of it; in each following phraſe intending to ſay ſomething more great or particular than what he had ſaid in the former, which is a moſt uſual and elegant ſcheme of Rhetorick. According to this account (as the words are very capable of it) there are four things here preſcribed to the rich man in the uſe of his riches.

1. That he do good with them, that is the moſt general point, that is, that he imploy them ſome way or other for the benefit of others. He muſt not live to himſelf alone, he muſt deſign greater things than the getting an eſtate, or the raiſing a family; if others be not advantaged by him, he is rich to no purpoſe. And therefore it will concern him to do kindneſſes and good offices where he can, to be liberal and Hoſpitable, to oblige his Friends and Relations all ways poſſible, to aſſiſt all about him with his counſel, to encourage them by his example; in a word, to make uſe of that Intereſt and Reputation that his fortune hath given him above others, to do kindneſſes to them.

2. He muſt not think it ſufficient to do this good now and then, upon particular and more rare occaſions; but he muſt abound in acts of goodneſs. That is the meaning of the Apoſtles ſecond expreſſion of being *rich in good works*. He muſt ſo ſtudy and improve in the Art of doing good, that

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his good deeds do equal his riches, nay the words import that his true riches are only placed in, and to be measured by his good deeds. He is not to think himself farther rich than he is rich in good works. The more plentifully God hath blessed him with worldly wealth, the more diligent and industrious and solicitous he must be to do good with it, otherwise he is poorer than those that perhaps he now and then out of charity relieves.

And 3*ly*, Lest this *doing good*, and *being rich in good works* should only be interpreted of doing such kindnesses and good deeds that cost us nothing but the expence of our time or the employment of our pains, or the use of our interest with others; the Apostle adds this further thing, that the Rich man must be *ready to distribute*; that is, very free to part with his money according to the proportion God hath blessed him with, upon every occasion of real and useful charity; whether that charity be of a more publick nature, as for instance, when it is expressed for the advancing Religion and the service of God, or for the making standing provisions for the poor, or lastly, any way for the serving the necessities, or increasing the conveniencies of the place where we live, by any publick useful benefaction: Or 2*ly*, whether this charity be of a more private nature, extending no farther than to particular persons that come in our way, whom

we are convinced to be real objects of it; to these likewise we must be ready to distribute; every poor necessitous person hath a right to part of what we have, if we can really satisfie our selves, that our alms will do him a real good, and will not be any great prejudice to us.

But 4*thly* and lastly, the Apostle adds another thing to all this, and that is, that the Rich man must *be willing to communicate*. If the sence of this phrase be different from the former it will seem to import yet a higher degree of Liberality. It will import that Rich men should be of such publick spirits, and so little esteem their wealth their own, that it should in a manner be made a *common* thing, wherein all should share as there was occasion. This is the notion of κοινωνία or *communicating*, as it was used in the beginning of Christianity. S. *Luke* in *Acts* 2. having told us that the first Christians continued in the Apostles doctrine, and in communicating, presently explains what he meant by that communion. *All* (saith he *v.* 44.) *that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need.*

God be thanked the Church of Christ is not now in such circumstances that it is either needful or reasonable precisely to observe the practice of those times as to this matter. We are not only not obliged to

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part with the propriety of our eſtate, and to live in common as the firſt perſecuted Chriſtians did, but we ſhould be highly indiſcreet, not to ſay injurious both to our ſelves and the publick, if we did. But this notwithſtanding, their practice and the charge here laid upon us to be *communicative* will thus far oblige us, *viz.* that we Chriſtians ſhould always retain that publick generous ſpirit that they in the firſt times were acted with. We ſhould ſit ſo looſe from the world, and ſo unconcerned in the diſtinction of *meum* and *tuum*, that we ſhould make it our buſineſs to do good with what we have, thinking our wealth beſt employed when it is put to that uſe. And when the cauſe of God, and the common intereſt of our Chriſtian Brethren doth require it, we ſhould then as freely part with all we have as our Predeceſſors in Chriſtianity did, Following herein the Precept of our Lord to the young man who came to enquire of him what he ſhould do that he might inherit eternal life, and who was thus anſwered by our Saviour, that though he had kept the Commandments, yet he wanted one thing to make him perfect (that is to make him a True Chriſtian) and that was, *to ſell all that he had and give to the poor and come and follow him, and then he ſhould have treaſure in Heaven*, Mat. 19. 21.

Thus have I given you a brief account of each particular of the Rich mans duty as it is ſumm'd up in the Text; and ſome perhaps will think it is ſevere enough; whether it be ſo or no, I now diſpute not, but I am ſure it is ſeverely required of them. This we may gather from S. *Pauls* way of urging it, *charge them* (ſaith he) *that are rich in this world that they be not high minded*, &c. He doth not ſay, recommend this to them as a thing that is very reaſonable in it ſelf, and will highly become them; he doth not ſay, put them in mind of it as a thing by which they may gain a great deal of Honour and reputation to their Religion; he doth not ſay, exhort and perſwade them to it, as a thing that will at laſt conduce to their own advantage: But he ſaith, *charge it upon them*, intimating that there was a neceſſity they ſhould thus practiſe, it was a duty indiſpenſably incumbent upon all of them; and this is the Second General Point I am to inſiſt on.

And certainly this order of S. *Paul* to *Timothy* is a ſtanding warrant, a perpetual commiſſion to all Miniſters of the Goſpel to charge the ſame thing upon all Rich men in all places and times. But in the preſſing and enforcing this charge I ſhall not ſo much have regard to the three former duties as to the laſt, which concerns the doing good with our wealth, the exerciſing acts of Bounty and Charity

Charity as we have opportunity. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*

Now in Four respects especially, Rich men are thus to be charged, and a necessity lies upon them to practise accordingly, *viz.*

In point of { *Gratitude,* *Justice,* *Religion,* *Self-preservation.*

If all these put together do not make the obligation indispensable I know not what will. I will speak briefly of each particular.

First, if Rich men do not thus employ their wealth, they are guilty of great *Ingratitude.* That is the least evil imputation they fall under, and yet to any ingenuous man it is heavy enough, for to call a man *Unthankful* is as great a reproach as you can cast upon him.

Whoever acknowledgeth the Being of God, and owns his Providence in the world, must necessarily believe that all that portion of good things which he enjoys in this life doth proceed from that God as the Author and Fountain, though they be immediately conveyed to him by the Ministery of second

cond Cauſes; and his Reaſon and Humanity will ſuggeſt to him, that there are ſome returns of Gratitude to be made to *Him* that of his free bounty hath thus obliged him; but what returns can he make to God for his bleſſings, other than in communicating thoſe bleſſings among his fellow creatures? To think that a verbal acknowledgment of *God*'s favours is a ſuitable return, is againſt the common ſence of mankind, who know that there goes more to a mans being truly grateful than the entertaining the perſon that obliged him with fair ſpeeches and profeſſions of his Obligations: And on the other ſide, to think of requiting God in a proper ſence, by returning real kindneſſes to him, for thoſe he hath done to us, is equally abſurd; for all the ſervices we can pay to him, cannot add any thing to his infinite Bleſſedneſs. How then muſt we expreſs our thankfulneſs for the wealth that he hath beſtowed upon us? why he himſelf hath preſcribed the way to us. He hath devolved his right to our kindneſs upon our Brethren. He hath deputed them to receive the real teſtimonies of our gratitude to him, and whatſoever obligations we put upon them, he takes them as an expreſſion of our Love and thankfulneſs to him.

This our Saviour himſelf hath told us in expreſs words, in the 25 of S. *Matt. Inaſmuch* (ſaith he) *as ye have done it, i. e.* done acts of kindneſs and charity *to*

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one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me. And the charitable contributions of the Hebrew Chriſtians to their indigent brethren, is by S. *Paul* ſtyled *a work and labour of love ſhewed to God* himſelf, *Heb. 6.* If therefore Rich men would not be unkind and ingrateful to him that gave them all they have; there is a neceſſity they ſhould do good, *&c.*

Secondly, The Practice of this muſt likewiſe be charged upon them in point of *Juſtice* as well as *Gratitude*, it is a piece of diſhoneſty not to do good with the wealth that God hath given us, for it is a falſifying our truſt, it is an embezling our Maſters goods, and putting them to quite other uſes than thoſe he gave us them for. We are not to think that God ever made a man rich for his own ſake alone, for the ſerving his own turns, and the ſatisfaction of his own private deſires without reſpect to the community. No at the beſt we are but the Stewards of Gods bleſſings. A ſtock of Talents he hath committed to all of us, to ſome in greater and to others in ſmaller proportions, and out of this ſtock he hath given us leave to make proviſion for the neceſſities and conveniencies of our ſelves and our families; but we muſt not think all our own that accrues to us, ſo that it is at our liberty whether we will hoard it up or ſpend it profuſely. No, we muſt have regard to the reſt of our Maſters ſervants. After we have ſerved our own needs we muſt

must dispense the surplusage among the family of God, otherwise we are false and wicked Stewards, we abuse and misemploy our Masters Talents, and a severe account we shall one day render for so doing.

Thirdly, Mens Religion and Christianity are also deeply concerned in this point. Works of Charity are so essential to all Religion, and more especially to that which we call Christian, that without them it is but an empty name in whosoever professes it. Let men pretend what they will, let them be never so Orthodox in their belief, or regular in their conversation, or strict in the performance of those duties that relate to the worship of God, yet if they be hard hearted and uncharitable, if God hath given them wealth, and they have not hearts to do good with it, they have no true piety towards God. They may have a name to *live*, but they are really *dead*. An unmerciful Christian, or a Religious covetous man, are terms that imply a contradiction. For the satisfying you of this, I shall but need to put these following questions.

Can that man be accounted Religious that neither loves God nor his neighbour? sure he cannot, for these two things are the whole of Religion as the Holy Scripture often assures us; but now the Covetous man neither doth the one nor the other. His neighbor he doth not love, that is certain; for

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if he did they would find ſome fruits of it; unleſs this be to be accounted love to give them good words, *to ſay to a brother or a ſiſter that is naked and deſtitute of daily food, depart in peace, be* ye *warmed and filled, when notwithſtanding they give them not thoſe things that be needful for the body.* But this kind of love S. *James* hath long ago declared not to be worth any thing. And as for the love of God another Apoſtle hath put it out of doubt, that the uncharitable man hath no ſuch thing in him. *Whoſo* (ſaith S. *John*) *hath this worlds good and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhuteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* *James* 2. 14. &c. 1 *John* 3. 17. cap. 4. 20.

Can he be thought a Religious man or a true Chriſtian, that wants the two main qualifications that go to the making up a Diſciple of Chriſt, that is to ſay, *Faith* and *Repentance*? yet this doth he that is *rich in this world, but is not rich in good works.* Good works are the very ſoul of Faith, and it is no more alive without them than the *Body* is without the *Spirit*, as S. *James* has expreſly told us. If we mean that our *Faith* ſhould avail us any thing, it muſt *work* (or be made perfect) *by Charity*; ſaith S. *Paul*, for though a man *have all faith* ſo *that he could remove mountains*, *i. e.* though he be ſo heartily perſwaded of the truth of Chriſts Religion as in *James* 2. 26. *Gal.* 5. 6.

the ſtrength of his belief to be able to work miracles, as was uſual in the firſt times of Chriſtianity,
1 Cor. 13. 2. *yet if he have not charity his Faith is nothing.* If it be ſaid that the charity that S. *Paul* makes ſo neceſſary to effectual Faith, is not giving alms but quite another thing, for according to him a
ver. 3. *man may give all his goods to feed the poor*, and yet want the Charity that he ſpeaks of: I anſwer, it is true a man may give alms, and very largely, and yet want that Charity that S. *Paul* here ſo much recommends; but then on the other ſide, none can have that Charity that he ſpeaks of, but they will certainly expreſs it in alms and bounty as they have ability and opportunity: ſo that for all this ſuggeſtion Alms and bounty are abſolutely neceſſary to the efficacy of Faith if there be opportunity of doing them: The plain account of this matter is this, S. *Paul* ſpeaks of Charity with reſpect to its inward principle in the heart, which conſiſts in an univerſal kindneſs and good will to the whole Creation of God; and we ſpeak of it with reſpect to the outward fruits of it in the life and converſation, which are all ſorts of good works, eſpecially works of mercy and bounty: but both theſe come to the ſame thing as to our purpoſe, for the one always follows the other; whereever there is charity in the heart it muſt of neceſſity ſhew it ſelf in theſe kind of actions as there is occaſion, otherwiſe the

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charity is not true but only pretended, for as S. *John* hath told us, *He that loveth* (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ) *in truth, must love* ἐν ἔργῳ *in work and in deed.*

And then as for *Repentance*; Charity and Alms-giving is a neceſſary ingredient into that alſo. When S. *John* Baptiſt came preaching Repentance unto *Iſrael*, the people asked him ſaying *what ſhall we do?* meaning in what manner they ſhould expreſs their Repentance: his anſwer was this, *He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat let him do ſo likewiſe*; and ſuitable to this was the Prophets advice to the King of *Babylon*, when he exhorteth him to Repentance, *break off thy ſins* (ſaith he) *by righteouſneſs, and thy iniquity by ſhewing mercy to the poor*, that is, evidence thy Repentance by thy Alms-giving and Charity. *Luke* 3.10, 11. *Dan.* 4.27.

Furthermore, can he be either a good man or a good Chriſtian, that lives in the habitual neglect of that, which of all other virtues God in Scripture ſeems to ſet the greateſt value upon; and contrariwiſe practiſeth that which God hath moſt particularly declared his hatred and averſion to? yet thus doth he that is not charitable with what he hath. So highly acceptable to God are works of mercy and charity, that they are declared to be *the ſacrifices with which he is well pleaſed*, *Heb.* 13.8. *the things in which he doth delight*, *Jerem.* 9. 24. and *bleſſed* and *happy* are they pronounced that do them, *Prov.* 22.9.

cap. 14. 21. for hereby men become *the children of God*, *Luke* 6. 35. and entitled to his more especial care and protection, *Ps.* 41. 1, *&c.* nay so dear do they render a man to his Maker, that the wise son of *Sirach* scrupled not to recommend the practice of them in these terms, *Be thou* (saith he) *a Father to the fatherless and instead of a husband unto their mother, so shalt thou be as the Son of the most high, and he shall love thee more than thy own mother doth.*

Eccles. 4. 10.

On the other side, if we will believe the Scripture, there is nothing more odious to God than the contrary qualities and practices. *The love of money*, which is the foundation of all uncharitableness, is in Scripture called *the root of all evil*; as certainly the greatest evils and mischiefs in the world do often take their beginning from thence. Those that are *covetous* are styled by the name of *Idolaters*, than which no more hateful appellation can be given to a man in the Sacred language. It is said of the *covetous* that *God abhorreth them*; which implies the utmost aversion that the Divine nature is capable of, to any sort of men or things. The uncharitable and hard-hearted men God hath declared he will have no mercy on; *but they shall have judgment without mercy that have shewed no mercy.*

1 *Tim.* 6. 10.

Eph. 5. 5.

Ps. 10. 3.

Jam. 2. 13.

Fourthly and lastly, a necessity there is, that *those that are rich in this world, should do good and be rich in good works, &c.* upon their own account. Though there

there were no other tye upon them, yet ſelf-love and ſelf-preſervation would oblige them to it. I meddle not here, how far in point of worldly intereſt they are concerned to be charitable; though even the motives drawn from hence are very conſiderable. For certainly, charity is a means not only to preſerve and ſecure to them what they have, and to make them enjoy it more comfortably, but alſo to increaſe their ſtore. No man is ever poorer for what he gives away in uſeful charity, but on the contrary he thrives better for it. God ſeldom fails, in this world amply to repay what is thus lent to him, beſides the other bleſſings that accompany his ſtore, and go along with it to his children after him. This I am ſure is ſolemnly promiſed, and in the ordinary diſpenſations of Providence we ſee it generally made good: whereas to the greedy and penurious man, all things fall out quite contrary; he may have wealth, but he hath little comfort in it; for a curſe generally attends it, of which he feels the ſad effects in a variouſly miſerable and vexatious life, and often in either having none, or an unfortunate poſterity.

But this is not the thing that I mean to inſiſt on. This world laſts but for a while, and it is no great matter how we fare in it; but we have ſouls that muſt live for ever. If therefore men have any kindneſs for them, if they mean not to be undone

to

to all eternity, it is absolutely necessary they should do good with what they have. O that uncharitable Rich men would think upon that woe that our Saviour pronounceth against them. *Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.* O that they would seriously consider and often remember those words of *Abraham* to the Rich man in *Hell*, *Son* (saith he) *remember that thou in thy life receivedst thy good things*, and Lazarus *evil things*; *but now he is comforted and thou art tormented*. Not that it is a crime to be rich, or to have good things in our life; no, it is the inordinate love of their wealth (to which those that have it are too frequently prone) and their not imploying it to those purposes of doing good for which it was given; it is these things that bring these curses upon them, and really *make it easier*, without an Hyperbole, *for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Luke* 18. 25. Certain it is there is no one sin that can be named, doth more fatally exclude from Salvation than this we are speaking of. We never find the Prophets, or the Apostles giving a list of those black crimes that will involve all that are guilty of them in inevitable destruction, but we are sure to meet with covetousness, and all the attendants of it among them; as many instances might be given. Nay so great is this sin of uncharitableness, and not doing

Luke 6.24.

Luke 16. 25.

good

good with our wealth, that God in the final sentence that he shall pass upon wicked men, to their condemnation at the last day, seems to take no notice of the other sins and crimes of their life, but only to censure them for this. Thus we find that when the King, having gathered all nations before him, comes to pronounce the sentence upon those on his left hand, who are those that are doomed to everlasting fire; there is no mention made of their criminal actions; they are not condemned for fraud and oppression, for unbelief and irreligion, for lewdness and debauchery, though any of these be enough to damn a man: but meerly for their not doing good, for their not relieving the necessitous, and exercising other acts of Charity when it was in their power. *Matth.* 25. 31, &c.

Since now from these Considerations it doth appear how necessary, how indispensable a duty it is to *do good* with what we have, to be *rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate*; let me at this time charge all of you that are *rich in this world*, as you would not be unthankful to your great Benefactor, nor unjust to your neighbours; as you have any piety towards God, or any care of your own souls, that you put it in practice. And two instances of this great duty the present occasion, and the exigence of things doth ob-

oblige me more particularly to recommend to you.

The first is the business of the Hospitals; the encouraging and promoting that Charity which the piety of our Ancestors begun, and whose examples their Successors have hitherto worthily followed, and of which we see excellent effects at this day; for this we need no better proof than the Report given in of the great number of poor Children, and other poor people maintained in the several Hospitals, under the pious care of the Lord Mayor, Commonalty, and Citizens of *London* the year last past.

For these so great instances of Charity, what have we to do, but with all Gratitude to commemorate those noble and publick spirits that first began them; and with all devotion to put up our prayers to God for all those now alive that have been promoters and encouragers of such good works; and lastly, with all chearfulness and diligence to follow these Patterns by liberally contributing to their Maintenance and advancement. These are the Publick Banks and Treasuries in which we may safely lodge that money which we lend out to God, and may from him expect the Interest. O what comfort will it be to us when we come to dye, to be able to say to our selves, That

portion

portion of goods that God hath in his Providence dispensed to me, I have neither kept unprofitably in a Napkin, nor squander'd it away upon my lusts, but part of it I have put out towards the restoring my miserable Brethren to the right use of their reason and understanding; part of it to the amending mens manners, and from idle and dissolute persons, redeeming them to virtue and sobriety, and making them someway profitable to the Publick; part of it for the healing the sick, and curing the wounded, and relieving the miserable and necessitous; and lastly, another part of it towards the Educating poor helpless Children in useful arts for their bodies, and in the Principles of True Religion for their Souls, that so both in their Bodies and Spirits they may be in a capacity to Glorifie God, and to serve their Countrey. These are all great things, and in which way soever of them we lay out our selves, we serve excellent ends of Charity.

But there is another point of useful publick Charity, which though the occasion of this meeting hath nothing to do with it, yet the present necessity of the thing doth oblige me seriously to recommend to you. There are few I believe in this City either ignorant, or insensible of the extreme numerousness of Beggars in our Streets, and unless care be taken, their number is likely to increase,

for this seems to be a growing evil. I dare not lay the fault of this upon the defectiveness of our Laws, nor dare I say, that the provisions made for the poor, are incompetent or disproportionable to the number of them, for perhaps the usual publick Taxes, and private Free-will offerings discretely managed, would go a great way towards the curing this evil; supposing the richer Parishes to contribute to the maintaining the poorer. But here is the misery, we do not sufficiently distinguish between our poor; nor take care to make provisions for them, according to their respective necessities. There are some that by reason either of old age, or evil accidents, are perfectly unable to earn a livelihood for themselves; or to be any way useful to the publick, except by their Prayers and their good examples; and to see such go a begging is a shame to our Christianity, and a reproach to our Government. There are others that are fit to labour, and might prove useful members of the Commonwealth many ways, if they were rightly managed: now the True Charity to these is not to relieve them, to the encouragement of their idleness; but to employ them, to put them into such a way that they may both maintain themselves and help towards the maintaining of others; and if they refuse this, let them suffer for their folly; for there is no reason *that those should eat that will not work*

if

if they be *able*. A neceſſity therefore there is if ever this ſcandalous publick nuſance of common begging be redreſſed, that theſe four things be taken care of. 1. That thoſe that cannot work be maintained without begging. 2. That thoſe that can work and are willing, have ſuch publick proviſions made that they may be employed in one way or other, according as they are capable, and every one receive fruits of his labour proportionable to his induſtry. 3. That thoſe that can work and will not, be proſecuted according to the Laws, as Rogues and Vagrants and peſts of the Kingdom. And laſtly, after ſuch publick proviſions are made for the maintaining both ſorts of Poor that are objects of Charity; that is, the helpleſs, and thoſe that endeavour to help themſelves; that all perſons be exhorted and directed to put their private Charity in the right Channel, wholly withdrawing it from the lazy and the luſty Beggars, leſt they be thereby encouraged in their infamous courſe of life, and giving it to thoſe who by publick order ſhall be recommended to them.

Theſe things I hope I may without offence recommend to the Wiſdom and Care of the Government of this Honourable City, ſince there are both *Heads* enough to contrive the particular ways of curing theſe evils, and *Hands* enough that will be open to contribute what is needful to ſo uſeful a

work. Certain it is the thing is practicable, ſince it hath been, and is practiſed in ſome Towns of this Nation, and in ſeveral beyond the Seas. And that it is needful, there is none that hath any true ſenſe of Charity (which conſiſts as much in taking care to prevent the miſeries and neceſſities of mankind, as in relieving them;) there is none that hath any regard to the Reputation of our Religion, or the Honour and good Government of this City or Kingdom, but muſt needs acknowledge.

It is one of the great Glories of this City, that as they have been always faithful and prudent in the management of thoſe Publick Charities that they have been entruſted with, ſo have they been very ready to encreaſe and to add to them. And God without doubt hath bleſſed them the more for this very thing; as indeed the beſt atonement that any people can make for the many ſins that the place is guilty of, is the Sacrifice of Alms and Charity. And I hope that which condemned *Sodom*; to wit, that *there were not ten righteous men found in it* (that is, men that were of a Publick ſpirit, that were truly Liberal, and Bountiful, and Charitable, for that is an uſual Notion of *Righteouſneſs* in the Old Teſtament, and there are ſome paſſages in this Hiſtory which make it probable that it may be the notion of it here) I ſay that very thing it is to be hoped, hath, and will preſerve this City of ours; be-

becauſe, as far as we can gather, there are in it many times ten ſuch Righteous perſons. In truth if there were not ſeveral good men among us, that by the exemplarity of their lives, and their Charity, do ſtand in the gap between the reigning ſins of the times, and the Judgments of God that threaten us for them; it would be a melancholy thing to think what would become of us. But ſo long as God is pleaſed to continue to us a ſucceſſion of thoſe that fear God, and hate covetouſneſs; that make it their buſineſs to do good and to ſerve their generation, there is hopes that he will yet continue to bleſs us. And ſo gracious hath God been to our City and Kingdom in this reſpect, that (to the glory of his name be it ſpoken) whatever boaſts they of the Church of *Rome* are wont to make of the Charitableneſs of their Religion, in oppoſition to the penuriouſneſs of ours; and reproach us with the bounty and munificence of our Popiſh Anceſtors, and the barrenneſs of their Proteſtant Succeſſors: yet we may ſafely affirm that there have been more publick works of Charity done in this City and Kingdom ſince the Reformation, than can be proved to have been done in the ſame compaſs of years during all the time that Popery prevailed among us.

O therefore let us go on to do this Honour to our Religion, let us go on by our good works to adorn

adorn the doctrine of God that we profeſs. Let us not only equal but labour to exceed the Piety and the Publick-ſpiritedneſs of our Forefathers. Let every one both Magiſtrates and People in their ſeveral capacities, be zealous and vigorous both in conſulting, in contriving, and in acting for the publick good as much as is poſſible.

And for your greater incouragement thus to do, let it be remembred, in the laſt place, that beſides the outward advantages both publick and private that we reap by being charitable; this is the beſt courſe we can take to ſecure our everlaſting Happineſs in the world to come. For *to do good* with our wealth, *to be rich in good works, to be ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, is* (as the Apoſtle in the Text tells us) *the way to lay up to our ſelves in ſtore a good Foundation againſt the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life.* And this is the Third thing I am to inſiſt on from the Text.

I mean not here to trouble you with the Criticiſms about the word θεμέλιον in the Text, by diſputing whether it ſhould be render'd *Foundation* as it is in our Tranſlation; though to lay up a foundation ſeems an unuſual way of ſpeaking; we do not lay up Foundations but build upon them: or whether the word ſhould be taken to ſignifie the *Bond* or the *Evidence* that God hath given us for the per-

performance of his part of the Covenant; as it is used by this Apostle elsewhere, where he tells us that the *Foundation of God standeth sure having this seal,* that is to say, that Covenant or Indenture, that God hath made with mankind, standeth sure, and hath this seal put to it; for men do not put seals to foundations but to Covenants: Or lastly, whether the word should be rendred a *Treasure*, so as to read the Text thus, *laying up to themselves a good Treasure against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*] The original word (say the Learned) is capable of being Translated all these ways, and the last seems as natural as any; for to lay up Treasure to our selves against the time to come, is a proper way of speaking, and that which our Saviour frequently useth in that very thing we are here treating of. But it matters not much which of them we pitch upon, for they all come to one sence; and that is this, That to be very charitable in this world is a good means to secure to our selves a title to eternal happiness in the next.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

Vid. Dr. Hammond *in loc.*

But to prevent all misunderstanding, that may happen of this point, I desire before I speak directly to it, to premise these two things.

First, Though we do maintain with the Ancient Church, the efficacy of Charity and good works for the furthering a mans Salvation, yet we utterly reject those doctrines which the Modern Roma-

Romaniſts have advanced in this matter. The Popiſh doctrines about good works are theſe three following, That good works are meritorious; do deſerve the Favour and the Rewards of God Almighty. Again, that the ſurpluſage of a mans good works, that is to ſay, the merits of ſo many of his good deeds, as are over and above what is ſufficient to ſave his own ſoul, may by the Church be diſpenſed out to the benefit of others, they being part of the Churches treaſure; and upon this foundation they ground their Indulgences. And laſtly, that good works, *i. e.* the Alms of dying perſons, that are given to the Church or Clergy, will by the means of the *Maſſes* and *Diriges* that they purchaſe to be ſaid for them, be effectual for the freeing their ſouls out of the Torments of *Purgatory*. Theſe are the Popiſh doctrines concerning good works, which we all juſtly reject, as having no foundation in Scripture, or good Antiquity; and being apparently contrived for the promoting their ſecular gain and advantage. But then as for the neceſſity, or the conduciveneſs of good works to a mans Salvation, which is all we here plead for, I know no good Proteſtant but doth as earneſtly contend for it as any of that Communion.

Secondly, Whatever efficacy we attribute to works of Charity as a means for the obtaining eternal life; we would not be underſtood hereby to ex-

exclude the necessary concurrence of other virtues and graces to that end. It doth not from hence follow, that it is an indifferent matter, what Religion a man is of, or what kind of life he leads, if he be but mighty bountiful to the poor, and do a great deal of good in his life. No, how acceptable to God soever the Sacrifice of Alms and Charity be, yet we are not to expect, it shall be available to our Salvation, unless it proceed from a pure heart, and be offered with a lively Faith in Jesus Christ, and accompanied with a sincere endeavour to obey all Gods Commandments. Eternal Happiness is not proposed in the Gospel, as a reward of any one single virtue, no not of the greatest, but of all of them together; if indeed there can be any true virtue where there is not a conjunction of all; I say if there can be, for S. *James* seems to affirm that there cannot. *Whosoever* (saith he) *shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* *Jam.* 2. 10.

But now having said this by way of caution to prevent all occasion that any may take from our so earnestly pressing Charity, to undervalue and neglect other duties: It cannot be denyed on the other side, that very great effects are by our Saviour and his Apostles, ascribed to this virtue with respect to mens Salvation in the other world.

Luk. 6.30, 35. In the 6th of S. *Luke*, our Lord thus adviseth, *Love* (saith he) *your enemies, give to him that asketh, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, so shall your reward be great, and ye shall be the children of the most highest.* Now sure to be entitled to *great rewards*, and to be the *children of the most high* doth look farther than this present world. Our Saviour without doubt means the same thing here, that he expresses upon the same occasion in another place, *viz. They* (those that you do good to) *cannot recompence you, but you shall be recompenced at the Resurrection of the just.*

Luke 14. 14.

Luke 16. Again the Parable of the *unjust Steward*, that provided so well for himself, against a bad time, out of his Masters goods; is wholly designed to this purpose; and that the Application of it sufficiently shews, for our Saviour having said that the Lord of this Steward commended him for his providence and care of himself, he thus applies it to all his Disciples. *Wherefore I say unto you, make you friends to your selves of the Mammon of unrighteousness* (*i. e.* of these false deceitful riches) *that when you fail you may be received into everlasting habitations*, plainly declaring, that the best provision that rich men can make for themselves, against the time of their death, in order to their reception into the other world, must be the charitable actions they do with their wealth while they live here.

ver. 9.

Lastly,

Lastly, In another place our Saviour saith the very same thing in effect, that is said in the Text; for this is his counsel to all that mean to be happy in the next life, *viz.* that they *sell that they have* (that is when the times are such that it is reasonable so to do) that *they give alms; for thereby they provide to themselves bags which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens where no thief approacheth nir moth corrupteth.* Luk 12.33

To these three Texts of our Saviour, I shall add three others of three of his Apostles which speak just to the same effect, and with them I shall conclude. The first is that of S. *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*; where having spoken most severe things, and denounced no less than Hell fire against the false brethren among them, yet thus he comforts the Church to whom he writes. *But beloved* (saith he) *we are perswaded better things of you, and things that do accompany salvation, though we thus speak.* Heb. 6.9. And what I pray is the reason he is thus perswaded? Verily this, *For God* (saith he) *is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shewed to his name, in that ye have ministred to the Saints, and yet do minister.* ver. 10. It was purely their Charity to the brethren, that made him have these good hopes of them, that they were in a state of Salvation. Though that Church as to other things was in a very degenerate condition, yet considering they had been laborious and diligent in the exercise

of Charity, and ſtill continued ſo to be, *God would not forget them*, nay he was not ſo *unrighteous as to forget them*. And then, that which follows in the next verſe, is very obſervable; *And we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence* (to wit, in the practice of charity) *to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end*. If they would have their hopes of a future life aſſured to them, the way to do it was to perſevere in their diligent attendance to works of mercy and kindneſs and charity.

ver. 11.

1 John 3. 16, &c.

The ſecond paſſage is that of S. *John*. *Hereby* (ſaith he) *perceive we the love of God towards us, becauſe he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoſo hath this worlds good, and ſeeth his brother hath need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.* I pray mind that. By our charitable diſpoſition and doing good to our brethren, by this we know we are true diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, and this is that, that *will aſſure our hearts*, will give us confidence to appear before God at the laſt day when he comes to judge the world. And this is a point that the Apoſtle thinks ſo conſiderable, that he goes over with it again in the next verſe, *Beloved if our hearts condemn us not* (*i. e.* condemn us not as to

to this point of love and charity) *then have we confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him, because we do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

The last Text to this purpose that I desire may be taken notice of, is that of S. *Peter*, *Above all things my brethren have fervent charity among your selves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.* O how comfortable are these words! there is none of us, even the best, but hath a multitude of sins to answer for; by what means now must we obtain, that these sins shall be *covered*? that is, shall be forgiven; for covering of sins is the forgiveness of them in the Scripture-language. Why, the Apostle hath directed us to the method, *above all things put on charity, for it is charity that shall cover the multitude of sins.* Charity is of that power with God, that it alone, is able to overcome the malignity of many of our sins and frailties, that would otherwise do us mischief. If any thing can make atonement for the carelessness and the many failings of our lives; and prevent the punishment that is due to them; it is to be very charitable, and to do much good: *Charity covers a multitude of sins in this life.* A great many temporal judgments, that would otherwise have fallen upon us for our sins are hereby prevented, and that not only private ones but publick too: And I think it no Popery to affirm that *Charity will cover a multitude of sins in the other life also.* That is, whoever is of a truly *charitable* disposition, and doth a great deal of good in his gene-

1 Pet. 4. 8.

Pf. 33. 1.

ration,

ration, though he may have a great many infirmities and miscarriages to answer for; yet if he be sincerely virtuous in the main, and so capable of the rewards of the other world; his other failings will be overlooked, they will be buried in his good deeds, and the man shall be rewarded notwithstanding. Or if he be a *vitious* person, and so must of necessity fall short of the glory that shall be revealed; yet still in proportion, the good he hath done in his life *will cover the multitude of sins*. Though it will not be available for the making him happy, because he is not capable of being so; yet it will be for the lessening his punishment. He shall be in a much more supportable condition among the miserable, than those that have been unmerciful, or cruel or uncharitable in their lives. O therefore what remains, but that considering all these things, we should *be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in these works of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. Giving all diligence to add to Faith, Virtue; and to virtue, Knowledge; and to knowledge, Temperance; and to temperance, Patience; and to patience, Godliness; and to godliness Brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, Charity. By our good works making our calling and election sure,* (so some Copies have the 10*th ver.* of 1 *Pet.* 1.) *that doing these things we may never fall; but an entrance may be ministred to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 *Cor.* 15. 58.

2 *Pet.* 1. 5, &c.

ver. 10.

THE END.